

Abstract

Introduction: Regarding the relatively high prevalence of psychological complications in family caregivers of people with Alzheimer, they need information on the disease and necessary care. Therefore, considering the substantial difficulty in taking care of these patients and the adverse effects of these psychological complications on the quality of provided care; it seems necessary to inform caregivers about the disease and necessary care, especially through distance learning methods. Thus, this study aimed to improve caregivers' knowledge and awareness on this disease in order to improve their performance and the quality of patient care and to reduce their stress through the provision of web-based health information.

Methods: This clinical trial used intervention and control groups. The sample size was estimated using Comparison of Two Means Method ($N= 50$). After obtaining the necessary permissions, the researcher visited Neurologists working across Kerman, Iran and asked them to send patients with Alzheimer to the researcher. Using purposive sampling, the participants were selected and then they were randomly and equally divided into the test and control groups. The participants were then pretested using Caregiver Knowledge Questionnaire and Burden of Care Scale. The caregiver were then provided with some health information in 12 sessions and within two months, through a website designed for this purpose. This information was provided in the form of textbooks, slideshows, presenting useful websites, pictures and videos. At the end of the intervention, the participants in both groups were posttested and the results were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Finding: Based on the results, the mean scores of the caregivers' knowledge in the test group increased by 6 points; however, no significant increase was observed in the control group. In addition, the mean scores of the caregiver burden scale in the test group decreased by 13.58 points— indicating the effectiveness of the intervention; however, no significant reduction was observed in the control group. On the other hand, the findings indicated that the knowledge scores can affect the caregiver burden; as one percent increase in the knowledge scores reduces the burden imposed on the caregivers nearly by one percent (-0.97) and this decrease is statistically significant.

Conclusion: The results showed that provision of web-based health information significantly increased caregivers' knowledge, and, on the other hand, reduced the burden of caring for patients with Alzheimer. The results can help authorities develop distance learning methods to educate, inform, support and advise caregivers to reduce their stress and to improve their care delivery and to some extent fill the gap left by lack of information and counseling centers across the community.

Keywords: Health information, web, knowledge, caregiver burden, Alzheimer